

KEEPING THE SOUL ALIVE

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

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“None can keep alive his own soul.”

Psalm 22:29

SELF-SUFFICIENCY is the sin of nature—all-sufficiency is the supply of grace. Ishmael, sent away into the wilderness with his bottle, is man trusting in himself—Isaac, dwelling by the never-failing wells of Gerar, is man led by grace to trust in the unfailing supplies of the God of all consolation. It is as hard to get man away from self-trust as it would be to reverse the course of Niagara.

He begins by believing that he can make himself alive—and when he is convinced that this is not possible, he then tries to entrench himself behind the idea that he can keep himself alive. Nay, though man be dead in trespasses and sins, and it be but a rank absurdity to imagine that death can produce life, yet the sinner still thinks that by something of his own he can create a soul within the ribs of death, that a sinner may grow into a saint of himself, that the man who is as full of sin as the leopard is full of spots, may yet by his own innate energy cast off his spots and become pure.

I say that when man is cured of that rank absurdity, he then will need as much trouble to be cured of another, for even those who are alive unto God fall, more or less, into the false confidence that they can keep their own souls alive, and he out of us all who best knows that he can do no such thing has, nevertheless, sometimes caught himself acting as if he did believe that he could keep his own soul alive.

To be sound in doctrine is one thing, but to have that orthodoxy in the heart is another thing. To believe that I am dependent every day upon the grace of God is easy, but to carry that dependence and the sense of that dependence into all my dealings with God and with man—this is not nature, but is in itself a work of grace.

Now, it is upon our entire dependence upon God as believers that I am to speak tonight. We have, if we are believers, been made alive from the dead. Our souls have been quickened by the life of Christ—we live with the life that Christ has given to us, but we cannot keep ourselves alive any more than we could first make ourselves alive. That is the point to be thought over tonight—may its rich and humbling instructions be sanctified to us all.

First, let me—

I. BREAK UP THIS DOCTRINE A LITTLE.

It is like one of the loaves brought to Christ—it needs breaking and we will break it up thus. The believer's life must be dependent upon God. He cannot maintain it by his own strength, *because of its very nature*. It is a derived life. We know how plainly our Savior puts this in the parable of the vine.

The life of the Christian is not the life of the separate plant put into the soil to suck for itself through its own throat, the nourishment out of the earth. It is the life of a plant which derives all its sap through the stem, through a root that is not in itself. It does not bear the root, nor a root, but the root bears it, so that once you cut away the branch from the vine, you have taken away the life from the branch, for though the life is in the branch as long as it is joined to the vine, yet it is not so in the branch itself that it is there at all apart from the vine.

You are dead—then where is your life? Your life is hid with Christ in God, and if you live at all, this is the reason. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Your life is not in yourselves as a separate life. Your

life, the true life of your soul, is a derived one, and is in Christ Jesus. Another illustration from the same blessed Word of God gives us the like sense.

We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. There is life in my hand—undoubted life—but let that hand be laid down upon the block, and the headsman's axe separate it from the arm, and there remains no life whatever in the hand that is separated from the vital center, the heart. The limb moves and has life in itself in a certain sense, but it is derived life, relative life—it only lives at all, in fact, because it is joined to something else in which its life more truly dwells.

You see then, brethren, that none can keep his own soul alive, because the soul's truest life is not in itself, but lies in another, even in Christ its Head.

Furthermore, the life that is in a believer *is a very dependent life*. We are born in regeneration, but after a child is born it will not live if the mother's care shall cease. It must be nursed. It must be fed. It must be dandled on the knee. It must have a thousand little wants supplied, which, if neglected, would be pretty sure to end that little life right speedily.

When our dear converts are born to Christ, our anxieties for them are not ended. Their life is but a frail and feeble thing, and though we believe they shall not die, but live, yet they only live because the great Father of the Christian family takes care that they shall be supplied with the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, that they shall be continually nursed in the ordinances of God's house, that they shall be trained, and instructed, and brought up until they come to the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

Brethren, just as the life of the babe would not be sustained unless something was done for it which it could not do for itself, so the life of the Christian is of the same sort—dependent upon the blessed offices of God the Holy Spirit, and of the gracious Redeemer, who watches over all the children of grace as a nurse watches over her child.

Yes, but you tell me that this is for young believers a great truth, but what of those that become men in Christ? I reply that still if the figure do not hold good, yet the truth itself does, and we will change the figure and come back to the one we had before.

The fully-developed arm will die if separated from the trunk, just as surely as the infant's arm—and yonder huge branch of the ancient oak, itself a tree, yet were it sundered from the oak, must wither. It matters not how great the growth of a Christian, nor how mature his experience, he still owes all he has and all he is to his union with Christ—he cannot keep his own soul alive.

If I might use such an allegory, it is something like this—all believers are pensioners upon the court of heaven. They begin, we may say, as pensioners when they are converted to draw out of heaven's bank, but a small pension. They are poor in grace, poor in faith, poor in everything, but they draw a pension just as large as they can manage to live upon.

By and by they are promoted, and their pension is now not £50 a year, but £100. By and by they are promoted yet again, but as they are promoted and draw more pension money, they spend more. There are certain demands upon them which require them still to spend whatever they get. So at last we will suppose that one of them has come to a high rank and he draws out of the court of the King's bank at the rate of £10,000 a year.

Yet, my brethren, if at any moment that pension should be stopped, he is just as poor a man as he that drew his £50, for, as I have said, he spent it as he received it—and if he be now rich, he is only rich because of the constant income which his gracious King is pleased to give him. But if that were stopped, he could no more keep alive his own soul, though he has come to the first rank in grace, than he could who has just commenced to draw from the bank of the King of Kings. Your spiritual riches all flow in from Christ, and if you are once separated from Him, you are naked, and poor, and miserable, be you who you may.

Still further breaking up this one truth, let me remark that *the believer's life is always an endangered life*. In some way or other, it is always in such danger that no man can keep it alive. I find that with some Christians, and with myself, one chief spiritual danger is that of sloth. I mean a tendency to grow

lethargic, to stop short where you are, to be pleased with attainments already reached, to lose youthful elasticity and ardor.

Well now, when is a soul more in danger than when it falls into spiritual sloth? Then, indeed, the great arch-enemy comes into the Christian camp, as David and Abishai stole into the camp of Saul—and as the great dragon, the enemy of souls—finds a Christian sleeping, he lifts his spear, and if he might but smite him this once, he would not need to smite him a second time.

Oh! if sovereign grace did not hold back that diabolic hand, if he could but give that one stroke, he would make a full end of the Christian man. Now, as we are, most of us, given to slumber at certain times, and may be surprised with it, the truth is most sure that we cannot keep alive our own souls.

But if our temptation should not be that of slumbering, yet who among us does not sometimes get faint? The most valorous believer sometimes finds his faith turn to unbelief. When David was in the midst of battle, we find that the king waxed faint, and Ishbosheth, the son of Goliath, had almost slain him, and there have been times when the offspring of some gigantic evil, which in other days we slew, has now been too much for us, and then we feel a-faint just when we most needed to be strong.

He that never has fainting fits may laugh at this, but I think he knows but little of spiritual life, for spiritual men find that all too often these fainting fits come upon them and then they feel that they cannot keep alive their own soul. Moreover, if we are neither faint nor slumbering, yet—I think I may speak for every Christian here—our life is attended with many temptations. Is there one Christian here who is never tempted? I was about to say I wish I could pursue his calling, but I think he cannot have looked at it aright.

There are temptations everywhere. Some of you work among ungodly associates. Some of you are in places more perilous still, namely, with those who profess to be religious, but who lie and whose example is generally more evil than the example of even outrageously godless men. Oh! there are snares in your business and there are snares in your pleasures. There are temptations in your wants, you poor. There are temptations in your plenty, you rich. There are perils in your knowledge, you men of reading. There are perils in your ignorance, you who read not at all.

There are evils that will pursue you in the street, that will follow you to your homes, that will even come to your beds. They will not let you find a shelter anywhere from them, for Satan spreads his snares wherever he sees God's birds of paradise. Who, then, amidst such dangers, can hope to keep his own soul alive? Even if we had an independent life, which I have shown you we have not, yet with such perils surrounding us, the Psalmist was strictly true when he said, "None can keep alive his own soul."

Once more. Remember that all *the supplies of our spiritual life are put, not in us, but into Christ*. We are not like the camel that can traverse the desert and carry with it its own supply of water for many days. No, we must drink continually from the flowing well, Christ Jesus, or we die. Everything that any one of us shall want between here and heaven is ready for us, but it is all in Christ—there is not a grain of it in ourselves.

When the Egyptians were passing through the seven years of famine and had eaten up all their own stores, there was quite enough corn in Egypt to keep them through the seven years, but it was all under lock and key in the granary, and Joseph had to keep it all. And so for the spiritual famine between here and the gates of heaven there is enough heavenly corn provided, but it is all in the granaries of the covenant, and it is all in the keeping of Jesus. If you want it, you must go to Jesus for it.

There is nothing but emptiness, and beggary, and famine, and death in all the fields of nature. You shall ransack heart, and head, and memory, and judgment through and through, and you shall not find so much as a solitary meal for your hungry soul to live upon within yourselves. Only in Christ is there enough, but there is enough in Him for every one of His people, blessed be His name.

So, then, because all the stores are in Christ, and there are no stores in ourselves, the text comes true again—"None can keep alive his own soul." We have thus broken up the doctrine, and here we will pause a minute.

Secondly, let us—

II. SEE WHAT OUR EXPERIENCE SAYS TO THIS DOCTRINE.

I will speak of some of the experience of God's servants and I should not wonder but what I shall be, as it were, holding up a looking-glass in which many here will see themselves.

Many of us have verified that we cannot keep our own souls alive in the following way—first, *by having our carnal security all shipwrecked*. Do you remember years ago now, or it may be only months ago with some of you, that you felt so confident? You had had a long time of peace and happiness. Whenever you went up to God's house, the Word was very sweet to you. In private prayer, you had much fellowship with Christ. At the Lord's Table you sat at the King's banquet and you said to yourselves, "I wonder how it is that so many Christians are doubting and fearing! I am not. My mountain stands firm. I shall never be moved."

You hardly dared to say that, but you whispered it to yourselves. You felt grateful to God that it was so, but I think there was a little self-congratulation, and you looked down a little upon some of your brethren who were not quite so joyous and confident as you.

Well now, shall I tell the story? It has happened to me, and I must blushing tell it. I doubt not it has also happened to you. Within a very short time a temptation surprised you and you fell into the trap. God's face was hidden from you—your soul was troubled and the scene was all changed—and whereas yesterday you could write yourselves down in big letters with certainty as a child of God, now you felt that if you were one, you were the meanest of them all.

You could have taken the chief seat in the synagogue yesterday, but now if there were a mouse hole you would have been glad to creep into it, and if there were a doorkeeper's place vacant, you would be happy to take it if you might but still be numbered with the household of God. I should not wonder but what you were a better man in the last case than you were before, though you did not think so.

Well, it was then when you began to perceive that you could not keep alive your own soul, for what you built up so delightfully turned out to be only just a card house—and Satan had but to give it one flip with his finger and over it went. You had piled up your habitation, and you thought it was all made of strong stone, but it was only rubbishing cement—and the first frost that came cracked it from the foundation right up to the top—and soon it began to totter about your ears. You have passed through that, and if you have, you know that you cannot keep alive your own soul.

Again, did you ever feel like this, my dear brethren and sisters? The Sabbath is coming round, and on Saturday night you are very glad that tomorrow is the Sabbath, but somehow or other you do not feel that interest in spiritual things that you did some months ago. You go up to the house of God and take your seat. The preacher seems altered—perhaps you half think he must be—but yet you hear of others who are feeding on the Word and so you conclude that there is a lack of appetite in yourselves, for you do not seem to enjoy it.

Then those hymns—why, they used to be like archangels' wings to you, and now you are just criticizing the style of the music and not much else. You do not drink into the Word when you get home and get your Bible open. Why, it used to blaze before your eyes. The promises seemed as if they were written in letters of light—but now that Bible is very dull to you.

You pray you could not give that up, but you rise from your knees as if you had not prayed, and you feel in all your religious exercises a kind of dullness and sleepiness. You go about it all. You cannot give it up and do not want to give it up. You would not give it up—you would sooner die than give it up—but still you cannot stir your soul.

I have often felt spiritually like those poor people who have taken opium, or some other drug, who have to be walked about by the hour together for fear lest they should go to sleep—and I have heard of people sticking pins into them to keep them awake. I have tried to stick pins into myself in a spiritual sense to try to wake myself up.

What can I be at to be sleeping while poor souls are perishing? How is it that I do not feel this truth more? Why does not that truth affect me more? It did once—why does it not now? Well now, whenever you are in that state of mind, you have learned this lesson—that you cannot keep alive your own soul.

Why, you cannot even wake your soul, much more quicken it. You cannot even stir it to vigor, with all your attempts, much less, then, could it be possible for you to preserve spiritual life. That must be a work of grace—your experience must teach you that.

And dear brethren, have you ever found, *under a severe trial, how difficult it is to exercise the grace* that you before thought you possessed very abundantly? You are just now, perhaps, being tried in your faith. You used to sing Luther's Psalm—

*“Loud may the troubled ocean roar.
In secret peace our souls abide.”*

Well, now the ocean has hardly began to roar. It is only just a little storm—but the sacred peace—where is that? Why, you are running to your neighbor to say, “What shall I do? There is so-and-so about to happen.” Your neighbor might well reply. “Did not I hear you sing the other day:

*‘Let mountains from their seats be hurled
Down to the deeps and buried there;
Convulsions shake the solid world;
My faith shall never yield to fear,’*

and yet here you are! Here you are?”

Ah! yes, we may smile, but we have all been through it. It reminds me of what an old country man used to tell me. “Ah!” he said—old Will Richardson—“I always find, sir, that I could do a long stretch of mowing in the winter, and I often think when the snow is on the ground and I see my old sickle hanging up, that I'd like to go out and do some harvesting, and I'd do it with the best of the young'uns, but you know, when the time comes for mowing I find that old Will cannot do much of it, and when the harvest comes round I find that it is very little that makes a good day's work for an old man like me.”

And you and I think like that sometimes. We say, “Oh! if I had a temptation now, how I could master it!” and then it comes and we find that we cannot master it. “Oh! if I were tried, how I could stand!” and we are tried and we cannot stand. Now this ought to teach us that we cannot keep alive our own soul.

Depend upon it, brother, that the very grace which you set most store by is probably that in which you are most deficient, and that virtue which you could almost wish to expose to peril because you feel yourself so safe in that respect, is just the joint in the plating of your armor through which the arrow would find its way. Boast not of anything. Above all, boast not of your best things, for they may prove your worst in the day of trial. You have found it so. It may be so again. “None can keep alive his own soul.”

Another piece of experience is this. You who love the Master may, perhaps, have been sometimes in a position in which *you have been fascinated by a temptation*. You know the figure I am using now in connection with the word fascination. Some of those large pythons that have to be fed upon living animals will have a rabbit, perhaps, put into their cage for them to feed upon. We are told that the poor little rabbit will sit up on its haunches quietly, calmly and still, because the python has fixed its eyes on the creature and fascinates it—and if it could escape, if the cage door were open so that it could run away, it cannot. It feels itself spellbound and sits there incapable of that motion by which it might escape—fascinated by the serpent's eyes.

Have you ever been in that position under a sin, and you would have fallen into it, only just then the spell was broken by providence? Something happened that you could not have looked for, and you escaped because you were a child of God. If you had not been a child of God, that fascination would have continued till it would have ended in your destruction, but if you have ever been under that fascination you will dread ever to expose yourselves to it again. You will take care to keep out of harm's

way again, but you will have learned at least this lesson, that you may be cast, even in providence, in such positions that nothing but the supernatural grace of God could deliver you, and you will then have seen that none can keep alive his own soul.

But one more illustration taken from our experience. *We have seen others fall into great sin* and that observation must have helped us to see that we could not keep ourselves. I do not wish to revive old memories for the sake of pain, but I would revive them for the humiliation they ought to cause us all.

Have you ever known a man whose prayers comforted and edified you, whose language about the things of God was full of savor, and full of instruction to the young, and even of comfort to the old? Have you never seen that man earnest, indefatigable, liberal? Have you never thought to yourselves, “I wish I were half as good as he!” Have you not known the time when a look from his eye would have cheered you and a good word from his lips would have been a blessing to you?

And yet you heard one day—and it was as though you had been felled to the earth—you heard that man had been living a life of sin, had been a hypocrite, and deceived the people of God! Well you remember that. Perhaps you remember that such a thing has happened not once, nor twice, and there are black marks down in your recollection concerning such a one, and such a one, and such a one.

Did you write down after that in your diary, “But I should never do the like”? Then you are a fool, be sure of that. But if, instead of that, you wrote down in your diary, “Hold thou me up and I shall be safe,” if you fell on your knees and said, “Lord, keep me, for:

*“Unless Thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last,”*

then you have learned a good lesson, and you have learned also the meaning of my text, “None can keep alive his own soul,” for that is what God meant to teach you. May you learn it from others and not have to painfully learn it by your own falls into sin.

My time has failed me, yet must I keep you a little longer while I dwell with great brevity, in the next place, upon—

III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS OF THE TEXT.

I have shown you the doctrine and the experience which backs it up. Now what are the practical lessons? They are these. First, *never entertain a good opinion of ourselves*. “What, never believe that I am saved?” Oh! yes, if you are saved, always believe that. But then, what is your ground for believing that you are saved? If that lies in your goodness, then away with it, for it is a bad foundation and the sooner you get off of it the better.

My dear brother, you are no better than the poor publican when he smote upon his breast and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and if you think you are any better than he, you do not know yourself. You will go down from this Tabernacle without a blessing if you are able to get higher up than he, and can say with the Pharisee, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.”

Nothing but a heap of dust and ashes, and a mass of misery and sin, are you but for sovereign grace. “In me,” says the apostle, “that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.” That is to say, “In me, inexperienced me, uninstructed me, unenlightened me, whatever else of good or of virtue may be appended to the word me, there dwells no good thing.” Grace, grace, grace alone can keep and must keep us, but as for any absolute personal acquirements, no confidence can be placed in any of these. Dear brother, take care that you have never a good opinion, then, of yourself.

The next lesson is—*never get away from the cross*. This psalm is all about Christ on the cross. “None can keep alive his own soul.” The life of souls is in the dying and living Savior. If you can live a day without feeling the blood of sprinkling, you have lived a dangerous day. If you feel that you can afford to go into any Christian duty without a Mediator, you are in danger. Dear brethren, sing always:

“There is a fountain filled with blood,”

and sing it always because you always want that fountain and always want the washing still.

Another lesson is *never neglect the means of grace*. If you cannot keep alive your own soul, then do not neglect the means through which God helps your soul to live. If you could live without food, why then, you would not come to the table at the time of meals, but as you cannot keep alive your soul, do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is.

I have known some who have said, “Oh! well, I can do as well at home. I can read this good book or that.” Sir, I know what it always comes to—it comes to bringing leanness into the soul, and by and by, if persisted in, it ends in apostasy, and proves that the man never had the grace of God at all. I find that I cannot do without the means of grace, and I believe that if I cannot, you cannot, my brother.

But there is a further lesson—*never rest on the means of grace*, for even by their use you cannot keep alive your soul. Do we live on sermons, live on hymns, live on other people’s prayers? Oh! no. The sermon is only useful because it is like a ladder to help you to climb. The prayer of another is only useful because it may be like a torch from another altar to set your sacrifice on a blaze. Never neglect the means, but never depend upon the means. Go above the means to the God of the means, and do not be satisfied with the mere means of grace, but try to get the grace of the means.

So let me add again, and I will sit down, *never run into temptation*. If you cannot keep your soul alive on safe ground, what can you do in the midst of pestilence? Those Christian people who are always saying, “Well, I do not see the harm of this,” and “I think I may do that”—I am afraid their grace must be very problematical—they cannot have any at all or they would not talk in that way.

A man who wishes to be living and healthy, but who feels his life to be in jeopardy, will not run any unnecessary risks. Go you not into the path of temptation, for while the devil tempts you, you may expect divine help, yet if you tempt the devil to tempt you, I do not know that there is any promise that God will help you.

Bless God daily, dear friends. Bless God daily if you are kept. As you cannot keep alive your own soul, if your soul is kept alive, bless God for it. Oh! I think that the children of God, when they get to mourning and saying, “I have not as much faith as So-and-so, I have not the love of the apostle Paul, I have not the joy of such-and-such a Christian,” they would do quite as well if they were to sit down and say, “Lord, while I mourn that I have not these things, I do bless You if I have half a grain of faith, for that will keep me out of hell.” If you have not got sunlight, do be thankful for candlelight.

Ah! the day may come when you will be glad to get the slightest evidence, so while you have got it, thank God for it. We ought to lament that we have not more grace, but we ought to be thankful that we have grace. If I am not a full-grown man in Christ, and ought to have been, I ought to mourn over my dwarfed estate. But if I am a child of God at all, there is something to be thankful for. Praise His name, then. Lift up the notes of song, you mournful ones. Yea, let every believer bless the name of the Lord.

And so let us close by saying this—if God has kept you alive, and you bless His name for it, *show your gratitude by helping others*. “None can keep alive his own soul,” but often a word from a brother may be a word from the great Father of us all. A gentle admonition from a matron may help a young sister. A word of wisdom from a father in Christ may help the young brother.

Oh! watch over one another. Be pastors to each other. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” I am sure that in this great London of ours, much of our safety against a wicked world will lie in keeping our ranks close. I know that young men coming up to London, even if they have the grace of God in their hearts—if they get isolated and separated, are very likely to be led astray.

Therefore, if there is any young Christian in the Tabernacle tonight who is spending his first Sunday evening in London and does not know anybody here, I say, my dear brother, hook on to one of our classes. Lay hold of somebody tonight that belongs to the church and try to make friends with him, for none of us can keep alive his own soul, and it is not good for man to be alone. God may mean by joining

you with this church and bringing you into some of the various classes, to bless you and keep your soul alive.

Ah! you have come up, have you, and taken a job in London, and you come out on Sunday evenings, and your mother told you to come here, and you are glad to listen to my voice tonight. Well, next Sunday afternoon, my sister, there is Mrs. Bartlett's Bible Class downstairs, where you will meet with many sisters in Christ, who will be glad to talk with you and cheer you.

Perhaps if you do not go into that class, you will be quite lonely, and by degrees grow cold and get laid aside. You will not be able to stand well alone, come and get a hold of some of your sisters in Christ, and by God's grace, though you cannot depend upon them, yet they may be the means in God's hand of helping you to stand.

Soldiers, close your ranks! Each man to his fellow stand firm for Christ. The enemy is doing all he can to break our solid ranks. Let us be true to one another and true to the great Captain who is at our head. Up to where the blood-red cross is the banner to which we all shall rally, let each man turn his eyes, and then next let each man look right and left upon his fellows, and help to hold up such as begin to stagger in the dreadful battle-shock, and who knows but that thus we may help to keep ourselves upon our feet, for he that helps others shall be helped himself. He that waters others shall be watered himself. God grant it may be so with you all, and may Jesus make and keep alive all our souls. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 27

Very much of the language of David used here, I trust, we can make our own. May the Spirit of God lead us to understand, by experience, what he has written.

Verse 1. *The LORD is my light and my salvation;*

I find no comfort anywhere else but in Him, and expect salvation from none but Himself. "The LORD is my light and my salvation."

1. *Whom shall I fear! The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid!*

Who can stand against Him? What strength can resist His strength? What darkness can baffle His light? What foes can prevent His salvation?

2. *When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.*

"They wanted to destroy me altogether—to eat me right up." If they did not destroy me, it was not from want of heart to do it, nor even from lack of power, for there were many of them. But I had not to fight, for they fell before they reached me. "They stumbled and fell."

3. *Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.*

Let them come on. They fell before—they will fall again. Let them come on. God was strong enough to meet them and overthrow them once. He will do it again. Therefore, why should we fear? Ah! dear brethren, those who have had the most experience of the divine fullness will rest most confident that nothing can harm them.

4. *One thing have I desired of the LORD that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.*

He only wished to be always like a child at home—live in God's house—no temporal structure, but wherever he was, he wished to feel that he was near to God—that all places were the mansions of the great Father, so that he might always have his eye fixed upon the beauty of the Lord, and his ear always open to listen to the voice of the Lord. Ah! if we can once get ourselves wholly given up to God, it will take our thoughts off the various oppositions we meet with and we shall no more be afraid.

5-6. *For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.*

It is a blessed resolution, not always easily carried out, but still it ought to be. Our life ought to be singing. It used to be sinning—it ought now to be singing, since the sin has been put away. Oh! happy are the men that know their God. If the whole world would be full of storms, yet may they rest in peace. Get near to God—acquaint yourself with Him and be at peace. The remedy for all trouble is dwelling near to God.

7-8. *Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. 8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

Are we always mindful of divine monitions? When the still small voice in the heart says, “Seek ye my face,” brothers and sisters, do we always at once respond and say, “Thy face, Lord, will I seek”? I am afraid we are often as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, and need to have the bit, and the bridle, and the rod. But happy are those who have a sensitive nature—quickly feel the movements of the Spirit of God.

9-10. *Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

He prayed, you see, and it looked a little unbelieving when he said, “Leave me not, neither forsake me.” But it was not so, for at once he confessed that he did not think that God would leave him, even when our father and mother, who are the last to leave us, should do so. “Then the Lord will take me up.”

11-14. *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

I suppose he meant that last sentence to be his own personal recommendation, derived from his own experience. “Wait, I say, on the Lord.” He had tried it—proved its wonderful power—as the restorative to his heart, and so he says—“Wait, I say, on the Lord.”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.